

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ARA-06 ISO-00 CIAE-00 PM-04 INR-07 L-03

ACDA-05 NSAE-00 PA-01 SS-15 PRS-01 SP-02 USIA-06

TRSE-00 SAJ-01 OMB-01 MC-02 EB-07 DODE-00 H-02 NSC-05

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R 101217Z OCT 75

FM AMEMBASSY THE HAGUE

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 6818

INFO AMEMBASSY BONN

AMEMBASSY BRUSSELS

AMEMBASSY COPENHAGEN

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY OSLO

AMEMBASSY OTTAWA

AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMCONSUL CURACAO

CINCLANT

USCINCEUR

USLOSACLANT

USMISSION NATO

USNMR SHAPE

C O N F I D E N T I A L THE HAGUE 5185

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: MPOL, NATO, NL

SUBJECT: PROPOSED REDUCTIONS IN NETHERLANDS ARMED FORCES

REF: (A) THE HAGUE 5112 DTG 071302Z OCT 75; (B) CURACAO 0529

DTG 081245Z OCT 75

1. SUMMARY: GON HAS DECIDED TO POSTPONE THE PLANNED DECOMMIS-
SIONING OF THRITEN RNLN NEPTUNE AIRCRAFT. NO FINAL DECISIONS
WILL BE MADE ABOUT THEIR EVENTUAL REPLACEMENT UNTIL FURTHER STUDY
AND CONSULTATION WITHIN NATO. END SUMMARY

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2. AS FORECAST REF (A), GON HAS WITHDRAWN DECISION TO DECOMMIS-
SION THIRTEEN RNLN NEPTUNE AIRCRAFT ON 1 JANUARY 1976. DECISION,
WHICH CAME AFTER FIRST TWO DAYS OF DEBATE IN THE LOWER HOUSE OF
STATEN GENERAAL (PARLIAMENT), REFLECTS BOTH ALLIED AND DOMESTIC
CRITICISM. PARTY LEADERS OF CONFESSIONAL PARTIES WHICH PARTICI-
PATE IN GOVERNMENT (CATHOLIC PEOPLE'S PARTY--27 SEATS; ANTI-REVO-
LUTIONARY PARTY--14 SEATS) TOOK POSITION THAT DEFENSE REDUCTIONS
SHOULD TAKE PLACE ONLY IN CONSULTATION WITH (AND BY IMPLICATION
IN AGREEMENT WITH) NATO. UNDER CIRCUMSTANCES, PRIME MINISTER DEN
UYL MUST HAVE BEEN AWARE THAT HIS GOVERNMENT DID NOT HAVE MAJORITY
SUPPORT ON THIS ISSUE IN PARLIAMENT AND CHOSE TO MAKE TACTICAL
RETREAT.

3. HOW LONG THE NEPTUNES WILL BE KEPT FLYING REMAINS OPEN TO
QUESTION AND WILL BE CONSIDERED IN CONTEXT OF VARIOUS POSSIBILITIES
FOR THEIR REPLACEMENT. AS REPORTED REF (A), ONE POSSIBILITY,
WHICH HAS BEEN GIVEN CERTAIN AMOUNT OF PLAY IN THE PRESS, IS
THE PURCHASE OF ADDITIONAL SECONDHAND ATLANTIQUES FROM FRG. POS-
SIBILITY THAT GON MAY PURCHASE P-3 ORIONS, WHILE NOT DEAD, LOOKS
HIGHLY UNLIKELY AT THIS JUNCTURE EVEN THOUGH RNLN REMAINS HIGHLY
INTERESTED IN ACQUIRING THESE AIRCRAFT. IMPLICATION OF DECISION
ON NEPTUNES IS THAT CRUISER ZEVEN PROVINCIE WILL BE TAKEN OUT OF
SERVICE AS ANNOUNCED.

4. COMMENT: WHILE IT IS GRATIFYING THAT ANNOUNCED DEFENSE REDUC-
TIONS WILL NOT BE CARRIED OUT IN FULL, LONGER RANGE PROBLEM OF
NETHERLANDS MARITIME AIR PATROL AND, INDEED, NETHERLANDS DEFENSE
POSTURE IN GENERAL REMAIN. GOVERNMENT THINKING IS STILL IN TERMS
OF DEFENSE BUDGET CUTS IN EACH OF THE NEXT THREE FISCAL YEARS.
HIGH-LEVEL MILITARY SOURCES HAVE EXPRESSED TO US THEIR SERIOUS
CONCERN ON THIS SCORE. WE CANNOT BE SURE, MOREOVER, THAT NATO
CONSULTATIONS, WHICH SOME OF THE COALITION PARTIES CONSIDER PRE-
REQUISITE FOR DEFENSE CUTS, WILL IN THE END STAND IN THE WAY OF
APPARENT DETERMINATION OF LABOR-DOMINATED GOVERNMENT NOT TO EXEMPT
DEFENSE FROM THE BUDGET CUTS WHICH GENERAL STATE OF THE ECONOMY
MAKES IMPERATIVE.
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